

Testimony before the Senate Natural Resources Committee**Opposing Passage of SB 325****by Mark Fix****February 18, 2015**

I am Mark Fix and I am a Rancher and Irrigator on the Tongue River about 20 miles SW of Miles City.

SB 325 intends to take away standards that are in review. The standards for EC (electrical conductivity) and SAR (sodium adsorption ratio) have been approved by EPA. The State of Wyoming sued Montana over these standards and the Wyoming judge ruled that EPA had to look at the standards again. Montana provided additional data to EPA and they have been in the process of review for the last 2 years. Per telephone conversations EPA expects to release their findings in the near future. At that point Montana may need to defend the standards again. This is essentially a battle that is still in court. By changing the law the way that this bill intends to do, we are destroying agriculture and making it more difficult for the State of Montana to effectively defend the standards that were put into place.

In regard to setting standards that are better than natural, what natural state will apply? The best water quality or the worse quality. If you set the standard for the best water quality then you are protecting the tributaries. If you set it for the worst conditions then you sacrifice agriculture and only allow industrial development. Agriculture is the number one industry in Montana and it must be protected.

Vote against SB 325.